CHAPTER-VII

THE PRACTICAL SHAPE OF M.K. GANDHI'S AND J. KRISHNAMURTI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

7.1 PRACTICAL SHAPE OF M.K. GANDHI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY.

i. INTRODUCTION.

M. K. Gandhi was not only a theoretical philosopher but he gave a practical shape to his educational philosophy. He believed that truth is that which bears out in testable situations. Whatever Idea is experimentally verifiable becomes true. So the title of his autobiography is ‘My Experiments with Truth’. He tested all his educational ideas through experiment in education and then advocated them. His educational philosophy evolved through these experiments. His ideas on education did not emerge suddenly but these are the outcomes of his long years of sustained thinking and experience in South Africa as well as in India of nearly 40 years.

ii. SOUTH AFRICA (DURBAN-1897)

M.K. Gandhi started experimenting in education in South Africa in 1897 at Durban and tried his own at home in connection with the education of his two sons and sister’s son he remarks, “Nevertheless I am of opinion that if I had insisted on their being educated somehow at public schools, they would have been deprived of the training that can be had only at the school of experience, or from contact with the parents. The artificial education they could have had in English or South Africa, torn from me, would never have taught them to simplicity and the spirit of service they show in their lives-today. And where a choice has to made between liberty and learning, who will not say that the former has to be preferred a thousand times to the latter”(M.K. Gandhi 1953).
So he did not send his children to European schools because he did not believe in English medium education and taught his children himself through their mother tongue as Gujarati at home.

He experimented with his system of education at the Phoenix settlement 1904 (Ideal School-Cum-Workshop), Tolstoy Farm in South Africa-1911 and later at the Shanthiniketan-1914, Satyagrah Ashram-1915, Sabarmathí Ashram-1916, Champaran-1917, Gujrat Vidyapith-1920, Wardha Scheme-1937.

iii THE INTENTION BEHIND THEIR ESTABLISHMENT

The intention of running Phoenix settlement originally meant for running the ‘Indian opinion’, a publication of which Gandhi was the Editor. Gradually a number of Satyagrahis swarmed to his cottage with their families. The aim was to integrate theory and practice to establish an ideal school-workshop, the aims to establish Tolstoy farm was an all round development of the child personality, understanding of the psychology of child learning, culture of heart, body building and vocational training dignity of labour, and lesson in self help. The aim of the Satyagraha ashram was to maintain social relationship between different groups (high and low caste) service of the country, consistent with the universal welfare, search for and insistence on truth, follow a code of conduct, non-violence or love chastity; control of the palate; non-stealing, non possession; physical labour, swadeshi; fearlessness, removal of untouchability and tolerance. The intention of Sabramati Ashram was to practice social education to strong the bond between ashramites, the principle of non-violence i.e. not killing venomous reptiles by all the inmates was practiced in the ashram. The intention to start six schools in six village in Bihar by M.K. Gandhi was to give training to the children of ‘indigo-labourers’ of civics amenities i.e. personal and social cleanliness.

The intention to start the Tolstoy farm was to provide ideal conditions to make family group. The unique feature of it was that teaches were not taken from outside but parents taught their children themselves. Here M.K. Gandhi
declared. “Only this much I knew—that under conditions, true education could be imparted only by parents and that Tolstoy Farm was a family, in which I occupied the place of the father and that I should so far as possible shoulder the responsibility for the training of the young” (M.K. Gandhi, 1927).

M.K. Gandhi launched the experiments of his education in Shanti Niketan soon after his return to India from England which ultimately culminated key to Swaraj.

iv. SITUATION AND ENVIRONMENT

M.K. Gandhi started a school in South Africa with 30 children.

M.K. Gandhi established Tolstoy farm in 1911 at Transvaal setup with the help and guidance of Hermann Kallenbach, a German co-worker. In this ashram various people of various religions like Hindu Muslims, Parsis, Christians live together.

In 1914 he provided ideal conditions in Shanthiniketan to make family group as teachers and students worked together and they quickly mixed with each other. The experiment conducted as a demonstration lesson in self-help by M.K. Gandhi and other members of the Phoenix party.

The Satyagraha in 1915 was started by M.K. Gandhi in Kochrab, Ahmedabad.

Originally ‘Sabarmati ashram’ was located in Kochrab, a small village near Ahmedabad. Because of the outbreak of plague this ashram was shifted to a place of clean surroundings near the Sabarmati Central Jail.

In Champaran-1917 M.K. Gandhi opened six primary schools in six villages in Bihar.

M.K. Gandhi also opened Gujraraj Vidhyapith in 1920 at Ahmedabad and The Basic National Education Scheme in 1937 at Wardha.
v. STRENGTH AND AGE OF THE STUDENTS

M.K. Gandhi started a school in South Africa with 30 children. The children studied in Tolstoy ashram were between 6 to 16 years of age.

In Satyagraha Ashram entertained 13-Tamilians (5 from South Africa and rest from different parts of the country). Total 25 men and women were in the Ashram.

In Sabarmati Ashram there were about 50 souls, men, women and children. They lived as one family unit. The life of the ashramites had the semblance of a camp life.

vi. ACTIVITIES

Activities of Phoenix Settlement were given both in literary aspects and training in agriculture and painting. Emphasis on clean surrounding, physical-labour as cooking, gardening etc along-with literary aspects and character training.

Activities of Tolstoy Farm were to give training of the culture of the heart and building of character, training of self-help. (Work was done by the inmates). Development of Physique through manual training (cooking, scavenging, gardening, digging, sandal making, simple carpentry and messenger work), emphasis on mother tongue English, Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati, Urdu, a little of Sanskrit, Elementary History, Geography and Arithmetic, training of moral and spiritual exercise, knowledge of God and self realization, general knowledge of one’s own religious scriptures. At school hours eight hours were given for vocational training (cooking, scavenging, gardening, digging, sandal making, simple carpentry and messenger work) and two hours for book learning.

Activities conducted in the Shanthiniketen were to introduce of model kitchen run by the teachers and students together to recognize dignity of labour (Lesson in self help) develop physique and moral health.
Activities conducted in Satyagraha Ashram were sanitary service, sacrificial spinning, agriculture, dairy, tannery and national education, good and sound training in social education, spiritual, intellectual and physical development, character building.

The main activities of Sabarmati Ashram were ‘weaving’, sanitary service, sacrificial, spinning, agriculture, dairy and tanning etc.

Main activities held at Champaran was on sanitation (cleanliness of self and surroundings) good manners, training of character, medical relief and less weightage on 3 R’s (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) formal grammar etc. was done.

vii. DISCIPLINE

Emphasis on self-discipline, inner discipline was encouraged to win the hearts of the students. There was no enforcement of discipline by force. No corporal punishment was given even in the case of misconduct. M.K. Gandhi observe, “If good children are taught together with bad ones and thrown into their company, they will lose nothing, provided all of them were put under the watchful care of their parents and guardians. (V.R. Taneja, 1990). Stress on the importance of Ahimsa in education was also taught.

viii. ROLE OF THE TEACHER

M.K. Gandhi provided home atmosphere in the phoenix settlement. Parents were playing the role of teacher and they were teaching through examples than precepts, conversation, walks and talks etc.

In Tolstoy Farm teacher was playing very important role. It was just like a family. Here teacher was teaching by example rather than by precept, good conduct and co-operation. They were leading virtuous life of discipline. The creed of non-violence was put into actual practice by teachers. Emphasis on practicing before preaching, M.K. Gandhi describes. “On Tolstoy Farm we made it a rule that the youngsters should not be asked to do what the teachers
did not do and, therefore, when they were asked to do any work, there was always a teacher co-operating and actually working with them. Hence, whatever the youngsters learnt, they learnt cheerfully” (M.K. Gandhi, 1927).

In satyagrah ashram teachers (Satyagrahi) were working with missionary spirit of love, dedication and devotion. They imparted social education removing difference of caste creed and religion. They brought equality.

In Champaran primary school teachers including women folk worked in a missionary spirit without getting emoluments. They were only provided free boarding and lodging by the villagers for their selfless service. Service of an expert doctor was also given in the village.

7.2 GUJARAT VIDYAPITH-1920

i. LOCATION.

Gujrat Vidyapith was founded by Mahatma Gandhi on 18th October, 1920 at Ahmedabad in the wake of the Non Cooperation Movement though for achieving freedom, it developed application of Gandhian thoughts and ideas in all aspects of education. The Vidyapith was first named as Rashtria Vidyapith (National Institute of University Education) but renamed later as Gujara Vidyapith.

The main stress was on devotion for liberation and knowledge. Mahatma Gandhi addressing the first batch of students of the Vidyapith on November 15, 1920 and says that I have done many great things for which I am proud. There is something for which I repent. Most of them were tasks of great responsibility. But let me say without exaggeration that I have not done anything which can be compared with today’s work.

ii. INTENTION TO ESTABLISH

The main intention to establish Gujarat Vidyapith was to prepare workers of character, ability, culture and dedication for the conduct of movements
connected with the regeneration of country in accordance with the ideals given by Mahatma Gandhi.

- Adherence to truth and non-violence
- Participation in productive work with a sense of dignity of labour,
- Acceptance of equality of religions
- Priority for the need of villages dwellers in all curricula and
- Use of mother-tongue as a medium of instructions.

iii. MANAGEMENT

The Vidyapith continued to be blessed by top freedom fighters, Gandhian educationists and leaders of the nation after Independence. Mahatma Gandhi remained its life long Chancellor. After Independence, the Gujarat Vidyapith reconstructed its higher education programmes. The succeeding chancellors, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri Morarji Desai and the present Chancellor Prof. Ramlal Parikh ensured the implementation of the integrated programmes for complete toleration of all established religions in all institutions connected with the Vidyapith and spiritual development of the pupil in consonance with truth and violence.

iv. RESOURCE GENERATION

The Vidhyapith was recognized as a ‘Deemed University’ since 1963 funded by the University Grants Commission for higher education programme.

The precincts of Gujarat Vidyapith remained humming with educational activities for the last nearly eight decades and continued to evolve several new ideas and experiments in research, training and extension in various fields of education.

In Gandhiji’s own words: “It endeavours to make truth and non-violence not matter for mere individual practice but for practice by Groups and Communities and Nations...I shall live and die in trying to realize it”.

183
v. ADMISSIONS, STUDY COURSES AND EXAMINATIONS.

The Gujarat Vidyapith imparts higher education with an integrated system of education teaching from the Nursery and Basic Schools to Higher Secondary from Bachelors to Master, M. Phil. and Doctorate level degree in various disciplines. It has around 1600 enrolment. It is a co-educational institution. Its academic year starts from June to April (1\textsuperscript{st} term June to October, 2\textsuperscript{nd} term November to April). Every year admission forms to get admission for all social science courses including MCA and DCA are available in April-May and for Teachers Training Courses in March and April. Annual examination for Social Sciences and Postgraduate Courses is May and for Teaching Training Course is April.

vi. FEATURES

The Unique Features of the Gujarat Vidyapith are ‘Physical exercise and training in manual work as compulsory in all the institutions connected with the Vidyapith.

To establish acceptance of equality of religions practice of complete tolerance of all religions in all institutions connected with the Vidyapith is practiced. Knowledge of religion is imparted in consonance with truth and non-violence.

In laying down the priorities of education, the needs of the village-dwellers is principal consideration as the growth of the nation depends not on its cities but its villages, the bulk of the funds of the Vidyapith and large number of teachers are primarily employed in the propagation of national education (Rasthraposhak) in villages.

The mother tongue has principal place and medium of instruction for all education in the Vidyapith. The teaching of Hindi-Hindustani (language commonly spoken by the masses of the north, both Hindu and Musalman, written in the Devnagari or Persian script) is compulsory in the curriculum.
Vocational training has same importance as intellectual education and only such occupation which are conducive to the nation are taught in Gujarat Vidyapith.

vii. ACTIVITIES

The education system of Gujarat Vidhyapith include regular participation in community work, residential life, social service, community prayers, simple and self reliant living, study tours and field studies, Hand spinning and training in Craft Work

The program of education has been linked with the national needs of rural uplift with a view to promote education conductive to the grass-root levels of the society.

The chief concern of the Gujarat Vidyapith is to conduct experiments in various fields of education with a view to develop the application of Gandhian thought and way in all aspects of education.

viii. MEMORIAL LECTURES

A series of Memorial Lectures are organized on ‘Science and Non-Violence’ every year in which eminent and distinguished scholars from different parts of the world participate.

ix. OBSERVATION OF INTERNATIONAL DAYS

The Gujarat Vidyapith observes a number of international days every year such as the International Women’s Day, Peace and Disarmament Day, World Environment Day, Hiroshima Day and World Human Rights Days.

x. APPLICATION OF TWIN CONCEPTS (TRUTH AND AHIMSA)

The teachers and trustees of the Vidyapith restrict themselves to those means only which are not inconsistent with truth and non-violence and shall consciously strive to carry them out. They regard un-touch-ability as a blot on
Hinduism, and shall strive to the best of their ability for its removal, and shall not exclude a body or a girl for reason of his or her un-touch-ability nor shall give him or her discriminatory treatment having once accorded admission to him or her. They regard hand-spinning as an essential part of the national regeneration movement and shall therefore spin regularly, except for unavoidable reasons and shall habitually wear khadi.

xi. RESEARCH AND STUDY CENTRES

Over the period several research and study centres have come up in the sprawling campus of the Vidyapith. They include Mahadev Desai College of Rural Services for boys and girls, College of Social Sciences, Centre of Science for Rural Development, Tribal Research and Training Institute, Jamanlal Bajaj Institute of Study in Ahimsa and an open shelf library with about one lakh books, a Hindi Academy, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Adult Education Resource Centre, Centre for Performing Arts, a Museum- “Gandhi Memorial Ashram” has also come up in the historic building where Gandhiji first set up his Ashram at Kochrab village in 1915, now a part of Ahmedabad city. The Navjivan Trust takes care of publications and reproductions of Gandhiji’s and Gandhi related literature from the Vidyapith campus.

7.3 BASIC EDUCATION OR THE WARDHA EDUCATION SCHEME (1937)

Basic Education is the most outstanding contribution of M.K. Gandhi to nation towards the development of world’s civilization. The impractical nature of the educational system introduced by the Britishers in India and non-violent order of society, encouraged M.K. Gandhi to introduce a new system of education based on our Indian need and aspirations. M.K. Gandhi says, ”It is worth noting that by receiving English education, we have enslaved the nation” (M.K. Gandhi, 1951)

In 1937, after trials and experiments over a period of forty years, M.K. Gandhi finalized a new scheme of education, the ‘Wardha Scheme’ or Basic National
Education in the ‘Harijan’ on a nation wide scale. All India National Conference in Wardha which unanimously approved M.K. Gandhi’s idea about education. It appointed a committee of the leading educationists with Dr. Zakir Husain as its chairman to give a hope to M.K. Gandhi’s plan. The report of the committee embodies ‘Basic National Education’.

i. NATURE OF BASIC EDUCATION.

Basic Education is generally interpreted as education through craft. This is true to a certain extent, but this is not the whole truth. The roots of Nai Talim go deeper. It is based on truth and non-violence in individual and collective life. Education is that which gives true freedom. Untruth and violence lead to bondage and can have no place in education.

“This true education must be easily available to every one. It is not meant for a few lakhs of city people but must be within easy reach of millions of villagers. This education cannot be given through the dry leaves of books. It can only by given through the book of life. It does not need any expenditure in money. It cannot be taken away by force. It can have nothing to do with the teaching of sectarian dogmas or rituals. It teaches the universal truths common to all religions”. (Report-1949).

M.K. Gandhi made a long inaugural speech on the salient features of his new educational scheme, followed by a critical discussion of all the aspects of the plan in which eminent educationists like Dr. Zakir Husain, Professor K.T. Shah, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Kaka Kalekar, Shri Mahadev Desai and many Ministers of Education took part. Eventually the Conference unanimously adopted the following resolutions:-

ii. RESOLUTIONS OF CONFERENCE.

“That free and compulsory education should be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale.

The medium of instruction must be mother tongue.
Throughout this period education should centre round some form of manual labour and productive work, and all other abilities to be developed or training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child” (The Indian Annual Register, 1938).

That this system of education would be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.

The conference thereafter appointed a committee of leading educationists with Dr. Zakir Husain as its Chairman to prepare a detailed syllabus on the lines of the above resolutions. This Committee examined the problem of education as it had emerged from the Wardha Conference in all its aspects and submitted its report to M.K. Gandhi on 2nd December 1937. This Report embodies Basic National Education.

iii. THE OUTSTANDING FEATURES OF BASIC EDUCATION OR THE WARDHA EDUCATION SCHEME.

a. FREE COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

Education should be free and compulsory for all boys and girls between the ages of seven and fourteen. “The girls may be withdrawn after the completion of their twelfth year if the guardians so desire” (Educational Reconstruction, 1939). This universal minimum education is styled Basic National Education by the Committee.

M.K. Gandhi’s Basic Education comprises all the stages of education i.e. Pre-primary, Post-primary, Higher and Adult education, but more and particular emphasis has been laid on the education of the children between seven and fourteen years of age. In his own words, “Primary education, extending over a period of 7 years or longer, and covering all the subjects up to the matriculation standard, except English, plus a vocation used as the vehicle for drawing out the minds of boys and girls in all departments of knowledge, should take the
place of what passes today under the name of primary, middle and high school education”. (Harijan, 2-10-1937).

M.K. Gandhi included Secondary in primary education, because it is the only education so-called that is available to a fraction of the people in our villages. He was convinced that, if we wished to ameliorate the rural conditions, we must combine the secondary with primary education. M.K. Gandhi wanted to leave higher education to private enterprises for meeting national requirement whether in the various industries, technical arts, belles-letters or fine arts. The state universities should be, purely examining bodies, self-supporting through the fees charged for examinations in his view.

b. CRAFT AS CENTRE OF EDUCATION.

Education should be imparted through some craft or productive work, which should provide the nucleus of all the other instruction provided in the school. The craft chosen must be learnt systematically and scientifically with a view to efficiency and practical results. It must not be learnt merely as a means either for intellectual work or for economic self-sufficiency. The observations of the Zakir Hussain Committee in this connection are very apt:–

“Modern educational thought is practically unanimous in commending the idea of educating children through some suitable form of production work. This method is considered to be the most effective approach to the problem of providing an integral all-sided education”. (Educational Reconstruction, 1939).

The advantages of making craft as the centre of education are many and they have been listed as follows by the Zakir Hussain Committee:

“Psychologically, it is desirable, because it relieves the child from the tyranny of a purely academic and theoretical instruction against which its active nature is always making a healthy protest. It balances the intellectual and practical elements of experience, and may be made an instrument of educating the body and the mind in co-ordination. The child acquires not the superficial literacy
which implies, after without warrant, a capacity to read the printed page, but the far more important capacity of using hand and intelligence for some constructive purpose. This, if we may be permitted to use the expression, is ‘the literacy of the whole personality’ (Educational Reconstruction, 1939).

Socially considered, the introduction of such practical productive work in education, to be participated in by all the children of the nation will tend to break down the existing barriers of prejudice between manual and intellectual workers, harmful alike for both. It will also cultivate in the only possible way a true sense of the dignity of labour and of human solidarity—an ethical and moral gain of incalculable significance”. (Education Reconstruction, 1939).

Economically considered, carried out intelligently and efficiently, the scheme will increase the productive capacity of our workers and will also enable them to utilize their leisure advantageously.

From the strictly educational point of view, greater concreteness and reality can be given to the knowledge acquired by children by making some significant craft the basis of education. Knowledge will thus become related to life and its various aspects will be correlated with one another. (Educational Reconstruction, 1939).

c. SELF-SUPPORTING ASPECT OF THE SCHEME.

This is the most important feature of the Basic National Education, which intended that the product of the craft must be economically paying. It aims at imparting education and simultaneously cutting at the root of unemployment. The basic idea of M.K. Gandhi’s scheme was that if the craft chosen was taught efficiently and thoroughly, firstly it makes the school to pay towards the cost of its teaching staff. Secondly it would also help the State to introduce immediately the scheme of free and compulsory Basic Education. Failing that, he thought, that the then existing political and financial condition of the country would make the cost of education rather prohibitive. M.K. Gandhi
observed that as a nation Indian were so backward in education that they could not be educated if the programme was to depend on money. Crores of children could not wait until the Government found the necessary finances. Hence, he suggested that education should be self-supporting. He viewed that the handicraft taught would not only develop the personality of the child but also make education self-supporting. He wanted that the products turned out by the children should have economic value.

M.K. Gandhi was particular that the craft chosen must be taught efficiently and thoroughly and also learnt by the children, not mechanically but systematically and scientifically with a view to efficiency and practical results. It must be learnt merely as a means either for intellectual work or for economic self-sufficiency. It was to be implemented both a means and an end.

d. **THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION.**

The thorny problem of the medium of instruction has been settled by the Zakir Husain Committee. According to it, the Basic National Education is to be imparted through the mother tongue. The commission observed, “The proper teaching of the mother-tongue is the foundation of all education. Without the capacity to speak effectively and to read and write correctly and lucidly, no one can develop precision of thought or clarity of ideas. Moreover, it is a means of introducing the child to the rich heritage of his people’s ideas, emotions and aspirations, and can, therefore, be made a valuable means of social education, whilst also instilling right ethical and moral values. Also, it is a natural outlet for the expression of the child’s aesthetic sense and appreciation, and if the proper approach is adopted, the study of literature becomes a source of joy and creative appreciation”. (Educational Reconstruction, 1939).

e. **THE CULT OF NON-VIOLENCE.**

Wardha Scheme is imbued with M.K. Gandhi’s cardinal creed of non-violence. It is the application of the law of non-violence in the training of the child as a
prospective citizen of the world. He wanted to create a generation which should believe in non-violence. This, he thought, to be the panacea for all evils. He said that where the whole atmosphere is redolent with the pure fragrance of ahimsa, boys and girls studying together will live like brothers and sisters in freedom and yet in self imposed restraint, the students would be bound to the teachers in all types of filial love, mutual respect and mutual trust. He wanted that every act of students should be accompanied by love. His scheme of education wanted to bring an age from which class and communal hatred was eliminated and exploitation was eschewed. Gandhi emphatically remarked, “we cannot, will not think of exploitation, and we have no alternative but this plan of education which is based on non-violence.(V.R. Taneja, 1990).

f. IDEAL OF CITIZENSHIP.

According to this Scheme the ideal of citizenship is very important because it aims to become increasingly democratic in the social, political, economic and cultural life of the country. Zakir Husain Committee observes, “The new generation must at least have an opportunity of understanding its own problems and rights and obligations. A completely new system is necessary to secure the minimum of education of the intelligent exercise of the rights and duties of citizens. Secondly, in modern times, the intelligent citizen must be an active member of society, able to repay in the form of some useful service what he owes to it as a member of an organized civilized community. An education which produces drags and parasites-whether rich or poor—stands condemned. It not only impairs the productive capacity and efficiency of society but also engenders a dangerous and immoral mentality. This scheme is designed to produce workers, who will look upon all kinds of useful work—including manual labour, even scavenging—as honourable, and who will be both able and willing to stand on their own feet. Such a close relationship of the work done at school to the work of the community will also enable the children to carry the outlook and attitudes acquired in the school environment into the wider world outside. Thus the new scheme which we are advocating will aim at
g. THE IDEA OF A CO-OPERATIVE COMMUNITY.

This feature of the Scheme envisages that the motive of social service will dominate all the activities of children during early years of childhood and youth. Even during the period of school education, they will feel that they are directly and personally co-operating in the great experiment of national education. It was on the basis of the above principle that the Zakir Husain Committee made the main outline of correlated programme of work for the whole period of seven years. It is expected that during this period the child will acquire the essential modicum of social and civic training.

7.4 CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF M.K. GANDHI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

More than six decades have gone by since Basic Education was introduced in our country. But it has not caught up with the Indian masses. Even since independence this system of education has been accepted as a national pattern for primary education. Judging from the opinion of people in general it is not yet as popular as it should be. No doubt that this system of education has sound educational theory based on psychological and sociological principles. It must be then in practice that it has fallen short of theoretical expectations. Factors becoming responsible for its slow progress are as follows:-

"the Basic Education moment is, in some ways, a radical departure, both in theory and practice and it requires a careful reorientation of ideas, attitudes and techniques....it is, therefore, a matter of no great surprise- though it is certainly one of disappointment- that the full implications of basic approach have not yet
been realized by many teachers and educational administrators". (K.G. Saiydain. 1949),

In some Basic schools too much emphasis was given on economic aspect or the productive aspect of education. This emphasis led the common people to believe that the children are turned into labourers. Sometimes even money earned by these crafts is not utilized properly by the students. They misused it for evil deeds. Moreover teachers remained too much preoccupied in producing manufactures and neglected academic educational objectives.

The artistic and aesthetic side of education in basic schools has been neglected. The only art work students do is the drawing of the charkha or rice plant or charts depicting the techniques of correlation. If not in theory at-least in practice the appreciation of art and beauty is neglected.

Learning in basic schools is restricted to learning from direct experience and to learning from the teacher. But all the teachers are not competent to tackle all the problems of education. Sometimes they lack knowledge and experience. Secondly self study of text books is almost excluded as no books are prescribed. The fact is unless a child has an access to a book his knowledge cannot be logically organized.

The establishment of a good Basic school involves a good deal of initial cost on the purchase of equipment for craft. There is always a recurring expenditure on the successful running of a good craft. The income from the product is not commensurate with the financial outlay. This factor discourages the introduction of Basic Education on a mass scale.

Some of the traditionalist developed natural resistance to departure from routine practice. They opposed it because they are apprehensive that since Basic Education will give birth to awakened citizens capable of analyzing the weaknesses of the present social and economic institutions and practices. They can tolerate it so long as it can produce men who have learnt to accept meekly
their subordination. They cannot tolerate it. They themselves want to overpower the educational system according to their fixed unprogressive ideals.

The implementation work of Basic Education was correctly started in villages. Unfortunately teachers who were used to an urban life misunderstood the whole spirit of Basic Education and divided the curriculum in two sections—the 'craft section' and the 'education section'. The former was meant for training in handicraft and the latter the training of intellect. First had nothing to do with, the second. They either did not make craft as the medium of instruction or if they make it, they did it for show rather than for achievement of positive and good results. Hence Basic Educational could not become village-centric. It assumed white-collar complexion.

Another factor which has retarded the progress of Basic Education is the apathy of administrators remarked by Assessment Committee on Basic Education that it is at the administrator level today, more than any other, that serious difficulties arise in the development of Basic Education. Education departments are concerned with innumerable problems. Basic Education is even now only a small and side item in their programmes of work. In none of the States did we find a Director of Public Instruction to whom Basic Education was an issue of utmost importance nor did one find any of them fully conversant with the problems of Basic Education in their respective States.

There is no doubt that Basic Education propounded by M.K. Gandhi has divided educators into two categories i.e. too 'pro' and too 'anti'. The thought of the former category believes that Basic Education is a spearhead of silent revolution to establish utopia of the self sufficient village community. The latter category of educators believes that Basic Education is more of sentiment than of sound educational philosophy. But the fact is that no one can deny that India has to be re-generated socially, morally, intellectually and politically through education only. For this a method suiting to the genius of our traditions and circumstances has to be found. Colossal illiteracy, ignorance and squalor
have to be broken. On this ground Basic Education propounded by M.K. Gandhi is no way violates the psychological and pedagogical principles. Secondly 'co-relation' is the natural way of knowing our environments. It arouses great interest. Education becomes significant for the child if the process of learning is combined with practical experience. Through craft the child gets an opportunity for self-expression, self-doing and develops sense of responsibility. Craft can not be reduced to child labour because child loves work, activity and movement. And a work becomes labour only when it is forced. In a Basic Schools craft works are not forced. Hence, to say that in Basis Schools children are turned into labourers is not correct.

It is also wrong to say that craft work neglects academic work. Craft in Basic Education becomes the means of academic work. Through craft work the hands handle tools before they draw and trace the writing, the eyes read the pictures of letters and words as they know other things in life, the ears catch the names and meanings of things and sentences.

India is a land of villages. About its 70% population still lives in villages. A larger sector of small scale industry is essential to utilize the limited capital resources of people living in rural areas. Development of Small Scale industry is desirable in view of over populated and developing country like India. It is the only system which can keep the rural population tied to their environment with contentment and happiness instead of running to towns for odd jobs. Once education of this kind has been provided for the great masses of people, they can not be kept by poverty and vested interest.

7.5 THE PRACTICAL SHAPE OF J. KRISHNAMURTI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTION

J.Krishnamurti was not only a theoretical philosopher but he gave a practical shape to his educational philosophy by opening schools all over the world-
U.S.A, U.K., Canada and India which besides being academically excellent and unique also commit to make students a real ‘refined human being’. These schools are run by Krishnamurti Foundations. The Krishnamurti’s Foundation of India (K.F.I.) is one among four foundations of International fame and repute. The others are in the U.S.A., U.K. and Canada. The school is Canada Wolfe Lake has been closed but the study centre is still continuing.


ii. THE MOTIVE BEHIND THE OPENING OF SCHOOLS.

The sole motive behind opening schools run by K.F.I. is

- To ‘awaken the ‘creative intelligence’ to be independent and objective.
- Awakening of the senses including working with the hands
- ‘To flower in goodness’
- To inculcate environment of love, freedom and responsibility to look, listen and learn at his own-level and pace.
- To encourage the ‘spirit of enquiry into human values’
- To create sense of belongingness towards humanity at large and cultivation of a global outlook.

It was observed that present system of education merely impart ‘knowledge and skills’ and ignores the sensitivity, fellow-feeling and understanding of oneself of the child.

These schools were established by J. Krishnamurti in an atmosphere of freedom, warmth and love without the crippling influence of external fear imposed by authorities. These schools provided ‘homelike’ environment to secure and to taste the joy and delight of learning.
7.6 RISHI VALLEY SCHOOL

i. LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE SCHOOL.

‘Rishi Valley” school started in 1931 when a group of educators moved from Madras to Rishi Valley. Earlier in 1926, J. Krishnamurti identified a site for the school near a very large and old Banyan tree. The campus is established near Madanapalle (J. Krishnamurti’s home town) in a remote valley in the interior of rural Andhra Pradesh in Chittoor District at the edge of the Karnataka plateau about 135 km northeast of Bangalore. The campus, on which the school is housed, has an area approximately 300 acres. It is situated in a pollution free, eco-friendly environment in a beautiful natural surrounding and is a delight and bless to Nature’s lovers. This school has dairy farms of its own with plenty of fresh and pure milk supply. The large land attached to the school is used for growing fruits and agriculture to create natural environment.

ii. INTENTION TO ESTABLISH SCHOOL.

In addition to academic excellence this school tries to create an atmosphere conducive to deep inquiry into oneself to enable both the teacher and the student to flower into total human beings. Therefore this school has done away with the conventional aids to learning like the system of reward and punishment and organized competitions.

iii. AFFILIATION AND ACADEMICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are students from all over India mostly from Southern states specially wards of followers of Krishnamurti’s philosophy. This school is entirely residential and co-educational English medium school. Each class has on an average 25 students. The Rishy Valley School has about 350 students from all parts of India and their ages range from 8+ to 18-standard IV to XII, and a teacher-student ratio of 1:9. The school has a well-qualified and dedicated staff,
Rishi Valley School is affiliated to the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations, New Delhi. It prepares students for the Indian Certificate (Class XII) examinations. The subjects offered at the +2 level include those in the Science, Commerce, and Humanities streams. The medium of instruction is English.

The Rishi Valley school has separate blocks for the junior and senior school, each equipped with a staff-room, a good library and audio-visual room having variety of latest audio-visual equipments, maps and other display materials, tape-recorder, record player, film strip projectors, documentary films, computers and even video as well. There is also a separate block for the administrative offices. Assemblies are held each morning in an open air auditorium.

iv. SCHOOL SESSIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Mid-June to mid-October and late November to late March

Registration must be done by October of the year prior to the academic year for which admission is sought. Class IV is the lowest grade in the school. The entry points are Classes IV, VI and VII, at the age of 8+, 10+ and 11+ respectively. A pre-registration questionnaire must be filled up and submitted in August-November of the year preceding the year of admission. These are scrutinized in January and short listed candidates are called for a formal test and interview. The parents of short listed candidates must attend the formal test and interview, usually conducted in February/March each year. The written tests are in English and Mathematics. There is also an oral interview at which the parents or guardians are expected to be present. Admission offers are made in early April.

v. RESOURCE GENERATION

The school runs chiefly with funds collected as fees from children. It does not receive aid in any form, either from government or from any private body.
vi. SCHOOL FEE

The annual fee was more than Rs.70000/- per annum; this figure includes boarding, lodging and tuition but excludes to-and-fro journeys, excursions and text books. The annual fee is expected to keep in step with inflation.

vii. SCHOLARSHIP

The various scholarship schemes offered to students are the Government of India merit-cum-means scholarships, the Indian Public Schools Conference (PSC) scholarships, the Rishi Valley School Scholarship Scheme and partial fee concession scheme of Rishi Valley School Scholarship fund.

viii. MANAGEMENT

The school is run by the Krishnamurti Foundation India. The local management of the school is vested in the Rishi Valley Executive Committee and the Principal.

ix. HOSTELS

The school being residential has separate hostels for boys, girls and for little children. The senior boys and girls stay separate large buildings divided into rooms and the junior students live in dormitories. These hostels are run under the supervision of a Houseparent. There is a common well-equipped dining-hall for all the students. The dining hall seats nearly 200 people at a time and serves the needs of the entire campus. Children are provided wholesome and nutritious food. Students are encouraged to become self reliant by taking part in the running of their hostels. All teaching and non-teaching staff is housed on the campus. A very healthy ‘rapport’ is established between the teacher and the taught. In the words of students ‘it is like a home away from our homes’. The parents can come to visit their children and stay in the guest houses in the school premises for a few days. The hostels are equipped with Bio-gas plant, solar heater for warm water and the kitchens are also equipped with modern
gadgets. The management of the school is further subdivided by forming various committees with the help of staff members and students.

x. HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

Health and physical well-being of the children is given topmost priority. The school has well-qualified medical officers in daily attendance. The school has dispensaries on the campus and immediate medical aid is available for 24 hours. The school has nearly an eight-bed hospital with a Resident Medical Officer and Nurse. Dispensaries provide free treatment to nearby villagers and to the workers and their families working on the estate. The medical officers conduct a periodical checkup of every student and keep his cumulative record.

xi. GAMES AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Games and physical exercises are given due attention in the school curriculum. These are conducted early morning and evening. A variety of games are offered to watch the interest of the students. Students go on hikes and hill climbing. Football, Hockey and cricket are played according to the season. There are four tennis courts, a basketball court, an indoor badminton court and ample grounds for volley ball, throw ball baseball and Indian games. Practice in athletics is conducted by qualified coaches who are invited from the state Sports Council. Swimming, gymnastics, Yoga, cross-country running and long distance cycling are other important activities of the school. Expert and experienced coaches are brought for each game from time to time. The school has excellent and expensive play grounds.

xii. ACTIVITIES

Music, dance and fine arts, the school provides for all students to learn vocal music under a competent teacher. Listening to good classical music- North Indian, Karnatak and Western-and the development of an ear for rhythm and appreciation of sound is part of the assembly. Students with an aptitude for music are given special lessons in vocal and instrumental music (Sitar and
Tabla). Apart from folk dance, the school arranges special coaching in Oddissi/Kathak dance for those who are interested.

xiii. ART AND CRAFT

This school runs a special department of Art and Craft to give free, spontaneous expression in color and found. A variety of crafts are taught like tye and dye, bandhani cloth and leather batik, collage, clay modeling, block making, graphic arts, tailoring, needle craft, embroidery, cooking etc.

There are many clubs that meet on regular basis, such as Public Speaking Club, Creative Writing Club, Journalism Club, Chess Club, Math Club, Astronomy Club and Dramatics Club. Students are encouraged and trained to participate in public speaking, quiz programmes, poetry recitation and essay writing.

xiv. SCIENCE AND TECHNICAL WORKSHOP AND EXHIBITIONS

In the science and technical workshops the students are encouraged to make models and replicas, to repair electric and other gadgets and to learn the use of a variety of tools. From time to time Art and Science workshops and exhibitions are arranged.

xv. DRAMATICS AND EXHIBITIONS

The school has amphitheatre and several open spaces for the production of plays, and literary and dramatic activities.

xvi. GARDENING AND CARE OF CAMPUS

An awareness is brought about in the students of this school regarding its environment for it is very necessary for them to learn while young, how to care for plants and gardens; how to keep the surroundings clean and beautiful; how to develop right attitudes to labour and manual work.

xvii. ALUMNI MEET

Alumni meet is arranged periodically in order to keep in touch with the old students and to know about them as well. A free exchange of ideas is
encouraged by them in order to get a deeper knowledge regarding the follow-up activity by the school.

xviii. ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

The school has an elaborate administrative system and the management committees of the schools selected by the members of the KFI deals with the recruitment of personnel, procurement and distribution of its finances, maintenance of school property and the organization and smooth running of the schools.

xix. UNIQUE FEATURES OF SCHOOLS

The unique feature of this school is that besides academic excellence stress is given on learning without fear jealousy or competition working with the hands, awakening of the senses inculcation of human values, cultivation of a global outlook to help the students to make a worthwhile total human being.

Unlike other public schools in our country there are no fixed uniform (ties, blazers). The classroom atmosphere is very casual as no authority is exerted by the teachers. The relation between the teacher and the taught is very informal. Some teachers are called by their first name by the students. The teacher and the student function at the same level, communicating through questioning and counter-questioning till the depths of the problems are exposed. During classroom teaching, even when noise and confusion is created while discussing a particular problem in the class the teacher normally stays unperturbed and helps in solving the problem amicably without losing temper.

Social service is done voluntarily by the students it is not made compulsory for them. Many students go to the rural school attached to Rishi Valley School to teach the poor students coming there from nearby villages and they are provided mid-day meals also by Rishi Valley Trust. In the school premise students have an excellent rapport with the servants of the school and they did almost all their work themselves.
Talks with visitors from all parts of the world are arranged and students are encouraged to ask questions freely and unhesitatingly. When J. Krishnamurti was alive he used to visit Rishi Valley school usually once a year and spent about three weeks. He used to initiate a dialogue with students and whole discussion with teachers. Now audio tapes and video films are heard and shown in the campus. Extension lectures by distinguished persons from various fields are organized from time to time.

‘Tree plantation campaign of the school’ is organized by students. They take active part in planting the sapling of trees and watering them and maintaining them. The result is even though the valley is badly hit by drought and is almost bereft of natural vegetation, the area within the school and its surrounding areas and both sides of the road that lead to Rishi Valley Estate is full of greenery.

There is a very healthy system in Rishi Valley School to minimize the social snobbery and stratification in our society between the economically rich and poor people as many students of ‘Rishi Valley School’ opt for taking a few periods of ‘Rural School’ in order to help the teachers who teach in rural school to children of nearby villages. Here the children are given free education, midday meal and free medical aid.

xx. ASTHACHAL (THE HILL WHERE THE SUNSET)

It is watching the sunset, developing appreciation for nature, observing nature as a process of learning, encouraging introspection and meditating and improving the overall sensitivity in the students.

It is the most worth mentioning unique, joyous and beautiful activity of Krishnamurti’s schools where the students sit calmly outside in the lap of Nature with total inner and outer silence, near the time of ‘sunset’ in the evening and while observing the sun-setting there is simultaneously an observation of the inner self too.
There is some external pressure exerted on the school regarding the examinations at the senior school stage in order to pass the I.C.S.E. and C.B.S.E. examination and the parents too are anxious about the results. At the junior stage the children are free from the panic of examinations, though the day to day evaluation of the students is recorded. At the higher stage the school adhere to the prescribed syllabus which has to be finished within the given period of time hence at that stage the school falls short of its ideological goal of ‘creating an atmosphere of total freedom’ from the tension of examinations.

7.7 CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF J. KRISHNAMURTI’S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE WORKING OF HIS SCHOOLS.

J. Krishnamurti is always for radical transformation of man, for mutation, for change of consciousness. However this change of consciousness can only be possible by continuous and total attention. Is constant watchfulness ever possible that too without any meaning of motive? Then change in the pattern of brain cells leaves one in total ambiguity. There are many words and statements made by J.Krishnamurti, which are too complex, encompassing different entangled meanings, so that in fact we do not know exactly what they mean. In the case of “The Process” in compassing excruciating pain in the head of J. Krishnamurti’s has still not be, explained by one.

He was deeply and exclusively concerned with the radical transformation of the psyche to the exclusion of many other problems of the world.

He was so frustrated towards the end of his life as he felt no one could understand him, were the people around him not serious enough or what? Inspite of some vaguefulness in his writings he still had a great message for humanity which can help in the evolving of the consciousness of mankind.

There is no doubt that schools established by J. Krishnamurti are certainly different and unique from government and non-government schools. The vision of J. Krishnamurti is realized to some extent but still there are some compromises made in these institutions. The teachers working in these schools
held the view that the parents of the school children wanted to get monthly progress report cards of their wards and in case their wards are weak in a particular subject. They insist upon the teachers to take special care in the form of providing extra coaching (tuitions) to them. Here teachers are to make a compromise with their ideology to satisfy them.

The problem also arises for the students after completing their education and coming out of these schools. They face difficulty in the adjustment to fit into conventional system of education which is examination dominated, bookish, overcrowded classes and lack of interaction between the teacher and the taught. The protected atmosphere of the school does not prepare the students for the outside world.

The schools also compromise with some upper middle class ways of life, as mostly, the students come from very rich families and again the school makes some compromise with the whims and fancies of the powerful management at times.

Some students studying in this school are ambitious and career conscious. They get confused with the non-competitive atmosphere of K.F.I. schools. Absence of competition makes them un-prepared for the outside fight. Not all students are ready to do the manual work though the teaching staffs do their best to un-condition their mind.

The lack of authority of teacher, some times make the classroom situation difficult to handle and teach, as there is at times too much of noise and commotion.

Many times, abstract ideas of J. Krishnamurti’s thought like freedom responsibility, education and truth are not properly understood by the students. These terms confused the young children. They did not follow these terms because their minds were not mature enough to follow and practice these terms in their day to day life.
It is also felt that children by nature are too restless and so much involved with the external world that activities like ‘Asthachal’ make some of the younger ones feel uncomfortable restless and uneasy instead of providing a joyous experience.

Inspite of all these above stated problems faced by the students and staff the investigator feels that many people leave J. Krishnamurti’s philosophy halfway, but the few, the very few, who follow what J. Krishnamurti tries to convey can be a beacon light and a blessing to the future generation. As the greatest legacy of the school was inculcation of an independent and questioning mind that did not accept authority, this questioning ability takes them to far off places in the world to be prosperous. This system of education provokes understanding themselves by seeing through themselves.

J. Krishnamurti points out that it is the inner world which brings disorder in the outer world hence he emphasizes that education should bring about a change in the source, the ‘individual psyche’ because it is the human beings and not gods that make society. In order to change the society we have to bring about a mutation in the brain cells of the individuals first and then automatically there will be harmony in society and the world.